

Conclusions

Over one in ten youth in Kenya are smoking cigarettes. The age of cigarette smoke initiation is becoming younger, starting to smoke at younger ages increases the risk of death from co Tobacco smoking related causes. What is more worrying, is the high number of those never smokers who intent to start smoking during the following year of this survey, a figure which translates into one in five youths. This figure is very high and it should be of great concern since the younger a person starts smoking, the more likely they would become addicted which will lead to premature morbidity and mortality from tobacco related illnesses.

School based health education programs particularly on the effects of tobacco use are very essential. The students should be encouraged to form health clubs where issues such as drug abuse and tobacco smoking in particular can be discussed. Discussions give lasting impression on youth than when the same issues are just taught in class. The Ministry of Education can develop guidelines for developing and implementing school based tobacco prevention programs in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, the World Health Organization and other relevant organizations.

Nicotine, one of the chemical compounds found in tobacco is highly addictive. This is the “catch” that hooks smokers to indulge in cigarette smoking. Even if one desires to stop cigarette smoking, it becomes very difficult for one to quit as a result of nicotine addiction. For instance, in this survey, three out four students who had started smoking had tried to stop the habit but failed. The best that can be done for the youth is to give them enough knowledge so that they do not try cigarette smoking.

Passive smoking is a significant risk factor for developing tobacco-related illnesses where the unborn child is also affected. Most of the students who had started smoking had been exposed to environmental tobacco smoke and due to insufficient knowledge on the dangers of tobacco smoke; they easily picked up the habit. Realizing that, almost everyone is becoming a tobacco user as a result of passive smoking, the government of Kenya has put in place some measures to protect the non smoking members of the society, by designating all government buildings in the country and all health institutions as smoke free zones.

Increasing the knowledge about the dangerous effects of tobacco on the society will increase correct attitude towards tobacco use and hence increase abstinence. It is therefore essential to give correct facts about the harmful effects of tobacco, such information will empower the youth to engage in informed discussions on dangers of tobacco use as a result of peer pressure.

Media and advertising has a great impact on the growing mind of the youth. The youth are in the stage of identification and they do easily picks up dangerous habits. Four out of five students surveyed, who were smokers had seen pro tobacco advertisement, while two out of five had been offered free cigarette by a tobacco company representative. These advertisements indeed have a direct impact on the youth’s attitude and behavior towards tobacco use.

Tobacco products are easily accessed by the youth as a result; they will easily use the tobacco products since they are readily available to them. Most of the youth that smoke had purchased the cigarettes without any restrictions.